

## **Predict Growth in Affordable Housing in Cities**

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TRENTON -- Despite the impression that the last open space in New Jersey is about to be paved over, there is still plenty of elbow room, a state consultant said yesterday.

"All of the growth and development that has occurred in the 240 years since our nation was founded has used 1.42 million acres, or 28 percent of the state's total area," Henry J. Mayer of Rutgers University's E.J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy told a meeting of the state Council on Affordable Housing.

Of the state's 4.98 million acres, about 1.24 million acres - mostly in South Jersey - are undeveloped and unconstrained, available for future development, Mayer said.

A second report presented to COAH found declining housing prices in New Jersey's cities and older suburbs are expected to make 47,306 houses affordable to people with low and moderate incomes by 2018.

The report found that as some cities attracted wealthier homebuyers or rural towns grew, they lost housing that was once affordable.

Since 1993, for example, gentrified Hoboken lost 921 affordable houses, Manchester Township (Burlington) lost 790, Perth Amboy, 669, and Montclair 404. Jersey City, despite rising housing prices in its Gold Coast and Downtown neighborhoods, added 2,597 affordable houses, Union added 1,881, Newark 1,487 and Trenton 526.

The report predicted that by 2018, Newark is expected to gain 5,725 units, Jersey City, 834, and Bayonne 423.

The COAH meeting was the first officiated by new state Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Joseph V. Doria Jr. of Bayonne.